

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSCE-00 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 FEA-01 /059 W
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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4037

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 05992

PASS WHITE HOUSE/SCHLESINGER AND GOLDMAN

E.O. 1165L: GDS
TAGS:ENERG, CA
SUBJECT: ASSURANCE THAT GAS PIPELINE SCENARIO WOULD BE
UNAFFECTED BY EARLY ELECTIONS

1. FOR SEVERAL MONTHS TRUDEAU AND HIS POLITICAL ADVISORS
HAVE BEEN DEBATING ADVISABILITY OF CALLING AN ELECTION
THIS YEAR TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE LIBERALS' COMMANDING
LEAD IN THE POLLS. TRUDEAU HAS BEEN RESISTING, ARGUING
HIS KNOWN DISLIKE OF CAMPAIGNING, POSSIBLE NEGATIVE PUBLIC
REACTION TO AN ELECTION SEEN AS OPPORTUNISTIC, AND THE
DISUTILITY OF CONFIRMING PROGRESSIVE-CONSERVATIVE ASCEN-
DENCY IN THE WEST AT A TIME WHEN THE LIBERALS ARE BEGINN-
ING TO MAKE SOME HEADWAY THERE. TRUDEAU SAID PUBLICLY
AGAIN YESTERDAY THAT HE WILL HAVE THE ELECTION IN 1978,
BUT HIS ADVISORS ARE STILL WORKING HARD ON HIM, AND MORE
AND MORE PEOPLE AROUND TOWN THINK THEY MAY PREVAIL.

2. MOST LIKELY SCENARIO FOR ELECTION WOULD BE DISSOLUTION
OF PARLIAMENT ANY TIME BETWEEN NOW AND EARLY AUGUST,
FOLLOWED BY MANDATORY 60 DAY CAMPAIGN. EARLY TIMING WOULD
BE DETERMINED BY TRADITION OF NOT HOLDING FEDERAL CAMPAIGNS
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WHILE QUEEN IS IN THE COUNTRY; SHE WILL VISIT CANADA
BEGINNING OCTOBER 14.

3. TRUDEAU'S CHIEF POLITICAL ADVISOR (AND MAIN PROPONENT
OF EARLY ELECTIONS) COUTTS ASSURED ME TODAY THAT ELECTION
DECISION WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT INTERFERE WITH THE GAS PIPE-
LINE SCENARIO. IF THE PARLIAMENT IS DISSOLVED, THE GOVERN-

MENT WILL GO AHEAD AND ANNOUNCE ITS DECISION IN AUGUST AND
"TAKE IT TO THE PEOPLE" RATHER THAN TO PARLIAMENT. THE
PLEDGE TO CONSULT PARLIAMENT WOULD BE MADE GOOD BY BRINGING
IN LEGISLATION IN OCTOBER WHEN PARLIAMENT RECONVENES.

4. COMMENT. COUTTS' ASSURANCE IS CLEARLY PREDICATED ON
AN ALCAN DECISION WHICH HE, LIKE THE PRIME MINISTER,
BELIEVES WOULD BE LARGELY NON-CONTROVERSIAL, AND INDEED
A SUBSTANTIAL PLUS FOR THE GOVERNMENT. ENDERS

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 08-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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